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THE FATHERLESS CHILDREN OF FRANCE

L E T T E R S

11

*Written by the Fatherless
Children of France to Their
American Godparents*



CHICAGO
ALLIED BAZAAR COMMITTEE
1917

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no. 1.

INTRODUCTION

THE display tables in our bookshops are groaning under the weight of warbooks and it seems a work of supererogation to add one whit to the expression of the world's misery. So we hasten to say that this is not a warbook. It is a book written by grateful little French children and dedicated to those who evoked this feeling of gratitude. It contains only a little of the warm feeling of love and thankfulness welling up in the hearts of the Fatherless Ones of France.

As we have read the childish letters written so laboriously and with such infinite pains, some of them sadly misspelt and guiltless of punctuation, others evidently censored by the maternal hand, and others still inspired by some older head, we have been profoundly moved and impressed. It seems that a great current of love has been set moving between these two republics, a current of disinterested, and selfless love finding expression on the one hand in generous helpfulness, on the other hand in loving gratitude. This current will grow until it becomes a great flood which will help to wash away the dark stains of conflict and will give us faith to believe in the high destiny of humanity. If the expression of the love of little children will help us to preserve this faith then the object of this little book is attained and it will again be true, as has happened all through the ages, that a little child shall lead us.

Elizabeth Hallare

PARIS, May 23, 1916.

*To the Young American protectors
of the French orphans*

MY DEAR CHILDREN: You do not know me, and I do not know you. We will probably never meet. I address you, nevertheless, as young friends with a heart which is that of a grandfather and I send you heartfelt thanks. Between your country and mine, there exist old ties. When your grandfathers took up arms for their independence, Frenchmen led by LaFayette and Rochambeau fought with them. You were not left in ignorance of this. You were reminded of it.

Today France is engaged in a terrible war. She is defending invaded soil. She struggles for the ideas that were also those of your fathers. The right and the liberty of people. You know this and have understood. You also know that a war like this claims many victims and makes many orphans. You do not ignore the fact that many of these orphans have need of help and protection. Therefore, you have said to yourself, "we also, young Americans, wish to come to the aid of the orphans of France, our friend." May you be blessed for this generous inspiration. France, profoundly touched, is thankful to you.

To the ties which already unite your country and ours you have added this touching tie of brotherly tenderness. The orphans of France who are and who will be helped by you, thank you.

(Signed) L. LIARD

Rector of the University of Paris.

CHAPTER I

*SOME of the letters
are painfully written
in a round childish hand
on carefully lined paper
where one can see
the anxious maternal
supervision.
Such is the letter
from little Fernande,
aged eight.*

Mines de Bert le 14 Novembre 1915

Madame et chère Bienfaitrice

Je viens vous remercier de votre grande
bonté pour moi, si mon papa chère pourrait
voir il serait content de me sentir sous votre
protection, j'ai huit ans Madame et ma
petite sœur a 4 ans, merci encore bien.

sincèrement

Votre petite protégée

Fernande Lalabard

MADAME AND DEAR BENEFACTRESS: I want
to thank you for your great kindness to me, if my
dear papa could see you he would be happy to
know I was in your care, I am eight years old
Madame and my little sister is 4, thank you again
very much.

Your little protégée

FERNANDE.



I

“I am proud and happy to be your protégée. I love you very much only I wish I could really know you. May I tell you something? I can almost hear my dear papa saying to me from his grave. ‘To drive out of France the invaders I left you, my dear ones all alone. But my death has brought you friends.’ And it is true, for on the other side of the ocean the friends of France have sent us comfort and love. Thank you, thank you a thousand times! Your name is written on my heart. May I send you a big hug?”

MARCELLE.

II

MY DEAR GODMOTHER: Allow me to give you this name since you really have adopted me as your godchild — and I can say you are very dear to me, for I already love you, you seem so good.

War, which has taken from me my dear papa, who died on the “Field of Honor” September 16, 1916, is showing itself now more favorable to me, since it gives you to me as Godmother and protector. And so will your little Josephine have at heart, to show herself worthy of your protection.

Here is the information you asked about me; I am ten years old, and I live with my Mamma and my little sister Theresa and my young brother Georges. I go to school daily at the “Pensionnat St. Joseph” and I am a Catholic. Mother and my teacher are satisfied with my behavior, still my studies are not always as good as they could be, for they say I am somewhat of a butterfly.

I do not want to keep on deserving this sorry epithet, but I would rather become a bee, very industrious, so as to please my Mamma, my Godfather and my good Godmothers — since all the ladies (of the Cercle Croix Rouge Française), inscribed on the paper, are all my Godmothers too.

Will you please thank all these ladies for their interest in me, and for yourself dear Godmother please keep the very best caresses of your little Godchild from France.

JOSEPHINE.



III

I received your letter today and I want to thank you for your kindness to a little unknown French boy whom you so kindly call your god-son.

I send you my picture. I have changed some since it was taken for then I was only four years old. I'm rather tall, I have light hair and blue eyes and fat red cheeks. I laugh a good deal but I'm really shy and like to stay with mamma.

Mamma is thirty five years old. She looks very much like me. I live with her and my old grandmother who is very feeble. Mamma is concièrege at one of the gates of a big park. For this work we get dry wood for fuel and we can live in a little low house surrounded by big trees and which has a mossy roof.

In the park there is an old château in ruins. Many people come to see it.

You ask me where the village is that I live in.

It is a very little place of five hundred inhabitants but there are many forests near by.

Now, dear Godmother,— will you let me call you dear Godmother? It would make me so happy. I would like to tell you how happy I am and proud too, that you admire my country, my beautiful France. At school we have the tri-colored flag hung up where we can always see it. We learn patriotic songs and recitations and we read over every day the names of the dead of our village. Twenty five have been killed. The proportion is greater than in other towns, they say. There are a good many wounded too.

ANTOINE.

CHAPTER II



IV

MADAME AND DEAR GODMOTHER: I am a very little boy. I am not quite eight and I am neither broad nor tall nor do I know very much. But I'm going to try hard to express my gratitude.

Mamma has already received the money that you sent and sends you her thanks. Poor mamma is so happy that someone is helping her for she is not very well and we miss dear papa very much. He was killed the 12th of November, 1914, at Fontenoy after having fought well. He was a farmer before the war and we were very happy for we loved each other very much. I have a good many uncles at the front. The brother of mamma is at home on leave now and he has the *Croix de guerre* and I am very proud of him.

FÉLIX.



V

Thank you very much. How good the little American children are to the fatherless children of France! My poor papa was asphyxiated by gas and he suffered very much and I cried very much.

I am well and so is mamma and so are my two brothers. I hope you are well. Thank you again.

ALICE.



Some of them are already taking upon themselves the grave responsibilities of the men of the family.

VI

MADemoiselle: As this is the second time that we have received the contribution sent to the Fatherless Children of France by our American comrades my brothers and sisters and I want to thank you most sincerely.

Mamma also wishes to thank you for she is most grateful for your kindness. It is now sixteen months since we had the sorrow of losing our dear papa. He was killed in Alsace. As for us, we stay on here working and as I am the oldest I have to work for my little brother and sister as well as for the sake of our dear papa. Please excuse my bad writing but believe in my sincere gratitude.

CLAUDE R.

You ask for my photograph but I am sending one of the whole family.



A little godson too small to write.

VII

“I am a big girl, and I know how to write to you myself, for I am eleven years old and I go to school. Also I am in good health. We think my poor papa was killed in the battle of Vanquair, because we have not heard from him since then. I will send you my photograph in two weeks. Mamma joins me in order to thank you. I send you my best friendship.

RENÉE.

Who lives with mamma, Madame Siméon.



VIII

I thank you very much for the kindness you have shown me. Please pardon my delay in writing you, my mother was sick.

I am an orphan without a father or mother. Father died from a chill which he caught at the front in his post of duty. He was given a furlough and came back to Paris to die at the Charity Hospital. He was a mechanic by trade. Mother was raising us, there were four of us children in the family and they are all dead. I was left alone with father, mother died two years before the war.

I found a person who was kind enough to let me live with her; I am fourteen and a half years old and am apprenticed to an illustrator. The profession pleases me very much and when I know how to do the work I will make my own living and will endeavor always to be good to please my second mother. Please pardon my chattering, I hope that you will be rewarded for your kindness to me.

Please accept my sincere thanks, LOUISE.



IX

MADAME: Yesterday I received your nice letter and you can imagine my joy at learning that an American lady is interested in me. I am very proud and very happy and I assure you, Madame that I shall do everything I can to please my mamma and my American godmother. I am nine years old and I go to school at Sasserno where I am in the tenth grade and I am generally fifth or sixth in the class. I have a sister named Jeanne who is taking a course in stenography at the Commercial school for girls. My mamma keeps a little restaurant but unfortunately she has very few customers since the war. My papa, a soldier in the 7th. batallion of infantry, fell bravely at Ypres and we cherish his memory with pride for he gave his life for France.

I am sending in this letter a picture of sister Jeanne and myself. I hope you may be glad to see the face of your little protégée. I received

the postal order for five francs that you were so kind as to send. I thank you very sincerely. I was very glad to receive a letter from you and if you come to France after the war you will certainly want to visit Nice and then I will have the pleasure of seeing you.

ALEXANDRE.

CHAPTER III



X

DEAR LITTLE FRIEND: Thank you for your parcel. It makes me very glad that the children of America think of their little comrades of France and do what they can to comfort their sorrow. When I say a prayer for my papa, who died for his country I always put in your name beside his because you gave your friendship to his fatherless child.

GERMAINE.



XI

DEAR BENEFACTRESS: I want to thank you for your generous gift. Without knowing you I love you for having had the touching thought of helping a little orphan. I am seven and a half years old. I live with my grandmother who has raised me ever since I was born. Before the war papa, mamma and my sister used to live in C. The Germans took C. and we haven't had any news of mamma nor of my sister.

My papa was wounded the first time at Reims. While he was getting better he came to spend a few days with my grandmother, then he went back to the front and was killed at Berry-au-Lac the 15th of June, 1915. With my letter I send my photograph. Grandma sends her grateful thanks with mine and I send respectful kisses.

ANGÈLE.

Who lives with her grandmother.



XII

DEAR FRIEND: I am so glad to have a friend in America who is willing to help us. My grandma says you have a kind heart and I love you very much never shall I forget your kindness I go every day to a school where there are four grades I am in the third.

My papa was a baker. He was killed in Belgium the 25th of August, 1914 while he was carrying a despatch to the general whose messenger he was. My mother died the next year and my little brother who is three years old and I are with my grandmother.

EMILE.



XIII

DEAR BENEFACTOR: My poor dear papa who left us at the beginning of the war was wounded on the first of September 1914 in the battle of the Marne and sent to Brittany. He stayed in the hospital until December. He seemed to be better from the wound on his leg and they sent him to St. Etienne. Four hours after his arrival he died from a hæmorrhage brought on by traveling.

Before the war we lived at Huriel. My papa was a servant on the farm where my mother worked by the day. Ever since our trouble we have lived with our grandparents at A. I have a little sister Marie Louise, born on the 5th. of April, 1915 and two little girls from the orphanage live with us one four years old named Carmen and the other seven months old called Marie. So there are five of us with mamma in her little lodging. I'll be eight years old in December. I am very tall.

MARGUERITE.



Marthe writes what she calls her diary to her "dear lady" and recounts some thrilling adventures as follows:

XIV

MY DEAR BENEFACTRESS: Although I am still a little girl and can't express myself very well I am very happy because of your sympathy for the misfortunes which have come to the fatherless children. Dear Benefactress mamma and I both send you our sincere thanks for helping her to bring me up. You do not know dear lady how sad I was when my poor papa died. He was such a good workman before this cruel war. He worked in pottery. When war was declared papa had to leave on the second of August, 1914 to defend our country with a sad heart at leaving us. On the 12th of August the ferocious enemy invaded our town, killed and burned eighty five of our houses and took all that was in them and killed four or



five families. We stayed three days in our cellars during the fight without eating. Then two days later we were taken prisoners. Everyone in town was expecting the whole day long to be shot. They kept telling us that our French government were assassins that we had brought on the war and that we ought to be satisfied. Fortunately a good kind lady like your self gave them 100,000 francs to save our lives. We were then shut up in a court yard of her castle. You can imagine dear Lady our anxiety. Then the enemy were driven back to Sarrelbourg after a few days. But soon after they came again and we had to flee without being able to carry anything away, no clothes, no furniture, we had to leave our good beds and walk for two weeks through shrapnel and shells, to sleep in the open or in the lofts in all kinds of weather just like our poor soldiers until we reached a place where they took care of poor refugees like ourselves. And thats the reason dear Lady we have

been here at Moulins for two years. Then another blow was the death of my father who was shot through the heart one night in the trenches. Now I am fatherless with two sisters but mamma and my sisters ask of God only courage to bear our troubles. We wear our mourning with pride that papa died for his country and in doing his duty as a Frenchman and now I see dear Lady that there are always kind souls who do not forsake little children whose fathers have died on the field of honour.

MARTHE.



XV

DEAR BENEFACTOR: I thank you very much for what you have done for me. My papa disappeared at the beginning of the war. Mamma is sick and the doctor says she mustn't work. I have a little sister Léone six years old and a little brother Antoine four years old. I am nine years old I am going to work hard in school so that I can send you nice letters.

Please receive the thanks and wishes for your happiness from a grateful little French girl.

GERMAINE.



XVI

I am so glad to have your address at last because I want to thank you for your kindness. Please may I ask you to tell me the name of the little girl or boy in America who offers me help?

I love him already very much and I'd be so happy to have his picture.

I am sending mine. It isn't very good because we live in the country where there are only traveling photographers.

I am ten years old. I go to school in the village where I am in the first class of the elementary grade. My teacher says that I work very hard. That's because I am thinking of my papa who fell for our dear France and who wanted me to study. I do it too, because of my little mamma for I'm her only comfort and because of my dear country which is having such a hard time. In order to deserve your

kindness and to prove my gratitude I shall work still more from now on.

My poor dear papa was a miller. He was killed at Fountenoy on the Aisne the 29th of October, 1914 by a ball in the trenches.

We know where his body lies. And when we can afford it we can perhaps go to look for him after the war so that we can lay him in our own little cemetery.

MADELEINE.



XVII

DEAR GODMOTHER: Your letter made me very happy and I thank you from my heart for your birthday wishes. Perhaps you would like to see my picture. I am the one marked with a cross. That is my little brother with me and my little sister who is six years old. We would be very happy if it was not for the war which has taken from us our poor father. He was killed in the trenches of Gruerie Woods, and we are alone with mamma who has to work very hard to take care of us now.

You may be sure, dear kind Godmother, that I shall do all I can to make you proud of me, and to be worthy of your kindness. I am glad I am,

Your little grateful godson,

PAUL.

The school teacher in the little village of Arpheuilles writes concerning little Georgette better known as Zézette.

XVIII

“Zézette has a little brother, a perfect little dear, four years old, very wide awake, a bit mischievous and I think he is going to make a fine little fellow. Zézette has more patience, is more thoughtful and is very diligent in school and she is so sweet and good that everybody loves her.”

Enclosed with this letter are several postal cards on the back of which is written the following in a large childish hand. “Good morning Doctor M. Good morning Mademoiselle D. this is your little protégée Georgette who has come to have a little talk with you and to thank you for your nice letter which I received this morning.

“You ask me if I need anything — yes — but what I want most is to know you and I would like to have your picture. I am well and in about a month you will receive my portrait and you will see how big I am for seven years. Grandfather Félix and Grandmother Pauline take care of me, my dear uncle and aunt love me and we live happily together. My little friends say that I am very nice. I have a little brother named Félix. He lives with my other grandmother. He is going to come here in October and go to school with me. Good-bye doctor, good bye Mademoiselle, I send you a hug.”

ZÉZETTE.

“I’ll write to you often.”



On the back of her photo sent a month later she writes:

“I am starting today on a long trip. I am going to Chicago to see you Mr. Benefactor to say good morning to you and to wish you very good health. What do you think of your little protégée? I wish that you would let me call you Grandpapa John, it is so sweet to say. I now call my grandpapa here, papa Félix — I send you a big kiss.”



And on the back of her brother's picture she says:

“This is my little brother Félix who wants to meet you. He is four years old and will go to school in October after vacation. Both of us send you a hug as well as to Mademoiselle D. My relatives send you their respectful salutations.”

ZÉZETTE.

Arpheuilles St Priest (Allier) France 30 août 1916

CARTE POSTALE

Grand-père Félix et grand-mère Pauline me
saluent ^{CORRESPONDANCE} bien, mon petit oncle et ma
petite tante m'aiment, nous faisons bon mi-
nage ensemble. mes petites compagnes disent
que je suis bien mignonne. — j'ai un petit
frère, il s'appelle Philé, il va bien avec mon
oncle grand-père, il va venir ici au mois d'octo-
bre et ira en classe avec moi. — j'habite
la maison où j'ai fait une croix. — au revoir,
mon sieur, au revoir ma de moi-selles je vous
embrasse bien fort
je vous en envoie souvent Je Zette verdier

Arpheuilles 30 août 1916 le 30 août
bonjour

CARTE POSTALE

monseigneur le docteur

^{CORRESPONDANCE}

^{ADRESSE}

Bonjour mademoiselle du pontet
c'est votre petite protégée Georgette qui
vient faire la causette avec vous et vous
remercier de votre affectueuse lettre que
j'ai reçue à matin
vous me demandez si j'ai besoin de quelque chose,
oui, mais ce que je désire le plus c'est de vous
connaître et je voudrais bien votre photogra-
phie. — je suis en bonne santé dans un mois
environ vous recevrez mon portrait et vous
verrez que je suis bien forte pour mes 7
ans j'



XIX

My brother Auguste is nine years old and I am ten. In a few years we'll be able to support ourselves and mamma too. In the meantime we are both going to school. Our papa would have liked us to be well educated so that we would be better men and could work better. So we are trying to do what he would have liked. Mamma tells us that is the only way to show that we still love him — Poor dear papa! The awful war took him from us as it has from so many French children. He was in a regiment of *chasseurs alpins* and fought in Alsace without receiving a wound; but in a battle at the end of February 1915 he was cruelly wounded — He was in a hospital in Lyons until April. Mamma was with him at the last — Before he died he told her what he wanted for us and she told us, crying all the while. Oh! Madame it is so sad to lose one's papa in the war! ANTONIN.



A little Parisian girl of twelve writes with charming informality to her young Godmother whom she calls:

XX

MA CHÈRE GRANDE AMIE: May I call you this even though I am six years younger than you? It will be one way of expressing all the affection that I shall feel from now on for one who has so kindly offered me her friendship.

You ask me who I am and how I look. I am a brunette, rather tall and big for twelve years. I will leave it to my photograph to tell you whether I am plain or nice looking. I have always been taught that a little girl ought not to be vain nor to compliment herself. As to character, my picture is harder to draw—Mamma says I am her little comfort, but mammas are very prejudiced! At school my teacher says that I am a dear little pupil, attentive and serious and that she is fond of me—You may believe what you wish of these two

opinions, all that I can say is that I do what I can to satisfy those who are dear to me. I want, when I grow up to be useful and have nobody about me but friends.

My family is a modest one. Alas! before the war we weren't rich but happiness lodged with us. Papa worked only for our sakes and little mamma made of our home a dear little nest—Papa was our joy and did everything to make us happy. Now the war has taken him from us and the person you are going to know is no longer a gay little girl but a sad little orphan. And that's why, dear little Rose, that I must answer your question by saying that although I love dolls I haven't time to play with them—I haven't any pets because it costs too much to keep them and then as you know the apartments in Paris aren't made for them.—

I shall wait impatiently for your next letter. . . . I shall try in my letters to make you understand and appreciate France which is suffering so sadly just now and which is so worthy of admiration and respect. In return you will tell me of the beauties of your country and you will tell me of those who have generous hearts like your own. . . . Having answered all your questions I say goodbye with regret—And I ask your leave to let me give you two big hearty kisses on your cheeks.

Your friend,

HÉLÈNE DENISE.



XXI

I received the money and I thank you with all my heart. I go to school and I work and I am a good boy. I am seven years old but I dont write very well yet. I send you my picture taken when I was three years old. Please receive the thanks of little Robert.



Ma chère bienfaitrice je viens à ma
tour avec mes 2 petits frères vous apporter
nos meilleurs amitiés Jeanne Dufraise





XXII

MY DEAR PROTECTRESS: A letter came to me yesterday announcing that you wanted to help my poor mamma to bring me up.

You ask me where I live. I live in a little house at the Red Cross of Chassenard. I have a brother and two sisters. I go to school. I study arithmetic and writing.

My dear Protectress you tell me that you are going to send me some clothes—Oh! what a joy for me because everything is getting very scarce in France. My mamma can hardly buy me clothes. You ask me if I am tall. I am 1 metre 40 centimetres high and I weigh 30 kilos. I have brown hair and I wear a long braid and a little hat. My dear friend, you ask me if I like red. I prefer black because it is the custom in our country to wear black when we have lost a father.

I was so glad to have your photograph I will send you mine soon and also one of the whole family for we have but one heart. ANTOINETTE.



XXIII

MADemoiselle: I'm still very young for I'm only seven years old. . . . Papa was a day laborer on the railroad but we were very happy together until the great war broke out and he went away to do his duty as all Frenchmen did—We never saw him again. I have two little sisters. The littlest was born after papa went away and he never saw her. . . . I am sending you our pictures on a postal card. If I had your picture I would be very glad and I would hang it up in our room.

JEANNE.

CHAPTER IV



XXIV

DEAR LITTLE BENEFACTOR: I thank you for your sympathy and for your great kindness to me. It is a very deep happiness to think that away over there, across the ocean, there is another little one who shares my sorrow. I am glad about the 45 francs you sent me, for it will give my mamma much comfort. I am ten years old and I live in the country with my mamma and my little brother who is four.

My dear papa was killed at Bois le Prêtre by a bomb dropped from a German aeroplane, but we are a little consoled that we were able to find him, and that he is buried in the cemetery. He was a farmer before the war, and my mamma works very hard to support my little brother and me, for we are not rich.

In my great gratitude to you, dear little friend

I pray for your happiness and for your health; also for the health and happiness of your good parents.

With my thanks I send you a thousand good wishes.

Your devoted
ROGER.

XXV

I have the honor to announce to you the receipt of your second postal order. You have been very kind and I thank you. I am still young. I am only ten years old and so cannot work very hard. I am still going to school. My poor papa went at the beginning of the war and after many hard months in the trenches he was killed in the Oise in June of 1915 by a shell. I have no real mamma but she who became my mamma does without things herself so that she can bring up my little sister and me. I am going to send you a photograph soon for I think of you as the fairy godmother that I used to hear about in stories. Please thank you very much and I shall be very bold and call you my own godmother. Perhaps I'll never see you and that makes me sad for you live so far away from my country but be sure I love you.

HENRIETTE.



XXVI

This from a little boy who, on the back of the accompanying photograph, prays God to end the war very soon. He writes from a little valley in the south of France.

I received, dear benefactor, your gift of 45 francs, and at once thank you for it.

My poor papa belonged to the 13th Alpine battalion, and was killed in an attack. He was killed by a ball. Since then our home is very sad. My papa was a farmer. I am eleven years old. I go to school. I have a little brother who is six years old. We had diphtheria. Since then I am not very well.

I send you my photograph and a view of our country.

Boy-like he ends the little letter rather abruptly and very formally; then evidently feeling that he has not been demonstrative enough adds as a post-script: I thank you many times.

GEORGES.



XXVII

DEAR LITTLE BENEFACTRESS: I want to thank you so much and from my heart for your kindness. My mamma, grandpa and I think of you every time we say our prayers and we ask God to send you a great deal of happiness. My dear papa would be very much touched if he knew of your kindness to his little girl. He was killed in the trenches in the Somme the 2nd of January 1915. He was 36 years old, my poor papa! He was a farmer before the war. Mamma, grandpa and I stay on the same farm, but we have to work very hard now that we are alone. My little brother and I are still too young to help them.

I am sending you my photograph and I wish that you would send me yours. I would place it where I could see it often. Thank you again dear little benefactress. Mamma, grandfather and my little brother send you a large part of their affection.

Your little protégée

FERNANDE.



After thanking his "dear benefactor and friend" for letter and money received little Jacques writes from Allier:

XXVIII

I am seven years old. I have a sister five years and a little brother two and a half.

Before this terrible war we lived all together, papa, mamma and my grandparents. But now we miss papa very much. We who loved him so dearly will never see him again. I hope with all my heart such sorrow will not come to you. Poor papa went away the first days of the mobilization, but very soon he was taken prisoner, and then he died in Germany of typhoid. Mamma cries all the time for him, but she is very brave and courageous, as a French woman should be.

Please tell the other little American children who have been so generous that the little French boys bless them.

And to you — please let a little orphan send you his best love and kisses, hoping that you once in a while will write to him.

I would like to have your photograph too, and if I dared I would ask you for it.

JACQUES.



XXIX

Mamma and I both want to say to you from our hearts "Thank you! Thank you!" I am still very young and I have two brothers and a little sister. We all know what you are doing for us and are very grateful. We ask God every day to reward you.

Do you know it is very sad not to have any longer a papa who used to love us so much and who earned enough every day to keep us? Your kind and generous heart knew this because we know you must have to give up many pleasures in order to help us. Thank you again. May God protect you and your family. May I send you the affection of a brother.

EUGÈNE.



The letters from grateful mothers are some of them as childlike as those of the little ones and they have even a deeper note of gratitude.

XXX

MADAME: In answer to your letter which I received the 8th of October, I want to thank you for your kindness to us and I am proud to see that our American brothers think of us for we admire them and love them.

Madame, I have three little children two little girls of seven and five years. Both go to school and a little boy of four who stays at home with me. Seeing how young they are Madame and not being very strong myself I cannot go out to work. They had a very good papa but alas! this terrible war has taken him off. This separation Madame has been a cruel one for us all. He was a day laborer and left us the eleventh day of the

mobilization, was wounded the third of October 1914, sent to the hospital and died of his wounds the 26th of November.



XXXI

I am sending you the photograph of my two children in reply to your request. How can I thank you for your goodness to my poor little fatherless children! All three of us are grateful from the heart and we pray that you may never know the horrors of this scourge of war. Please accept from me, their mamma, and from my little ones our thanks and sincere affection.



XXXII

SIR AND DEAR LITTLE COMRADE: I have been very deeply touched by your sentiments of affectionate sympathy for my dear little Gilbert, three years old, who, like many others, had the misfortune of losing his father in this terrible war, defending the right and freedom of the people.

My husband was a mechanic and a chauffeur and was mobilized at the beginning of the war. He disappeared on August 24, 1914 during the battle of Ipincourt (Meuse) doing his duty as a soldier. From that date, notwithstanding diligent inquiry I have never been able to ascertain what became of him. I am deeply touched by your spontaneous kindness and I want to thank you for your generous act, and I hasten to enclose herewith the picture of my son in order that his young benefactor may be better acquainted with him. It will afford me great pleasure to receive further news from you

and I will promptly reply to your letters. In this tragic hour a memory of the goodness of soul of my little benefactor from America cannot but prove to me his deep affection for France and I thank him very, very much.

Please accept, my dear little comrade, my cordial remembrance as well as a good kiss from your little protégé.

FOR MY SON GILBERT.

P. S. Give my respects to your dear parents.



XXXIII

MY DEAR BENEFACTOR: My little Gaston and myself wish to tell you how much your kindness and interest towards us has made us happy and we thank you very sincerely for the remittance you were so kind to send us through the Committee who has just given us your address. We did not want to wait any longer before thanking you. My little Gaston and myself are very deeply touched

at seeing that a brother in America takes some interest in him at the moment of his great misfortune in losing his dear father whom he adored and who was so good to him, at an age when he would have so much need of his father. My little Gaston will be 8 years old on the 24th of next January. My husband fell gloriously before the enemy on November 4th, 1914 in St. Eloi near Ypres in Belgium. He was at that time a Sergeant in the 4th Zouaves a crack regiment and one that has been so hardly tried.

The Committee requests us to send you the picture of little Gaston and I am going to have it taken and will send it to you so that you may know him; we would be very glad to receive your picture too as it will be a great pleasure for us to know you.

Trusting to have the pleasure of hearing from you, little Gaston and myself thank you very sincerely.



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